LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Information Bulletin

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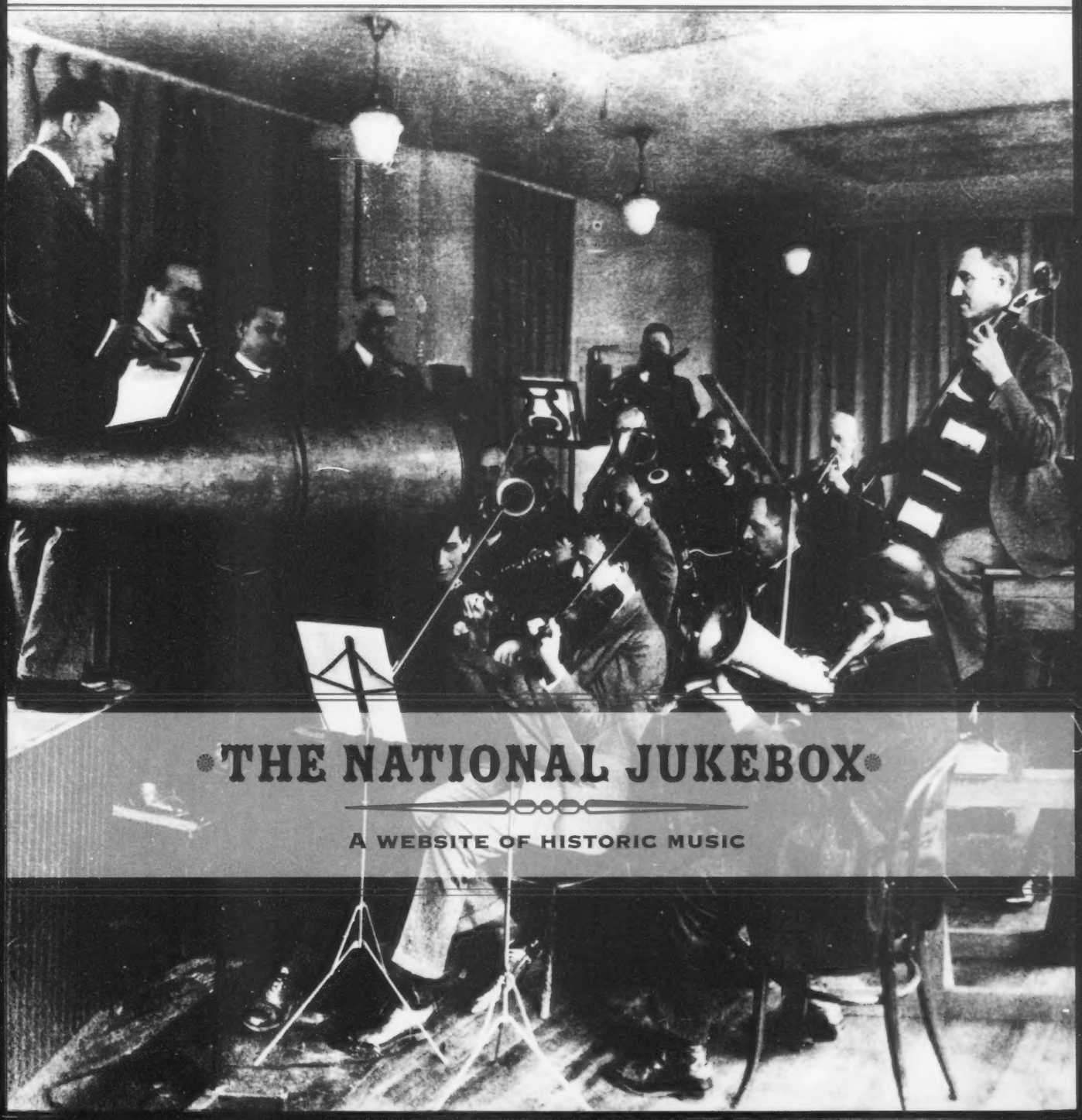
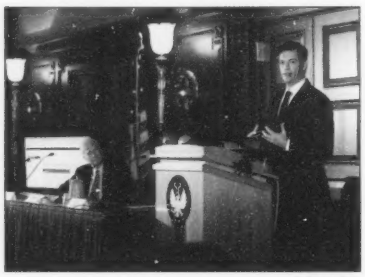
June 2011



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
# Information Bulletin

Vol. 70, No. 6 June 2011

JAMES H. BILLINGTON
Librarian of Congress



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**On the Cover:** Rosario Bourdon conducts the Victor Orchestra during the era of acoustical recording. Before the invention of the microphone, the musicians gathered closely in front of the large recording horn, which in turn funneled their sounds to the master wax disc. *Photo courtesy of Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division*

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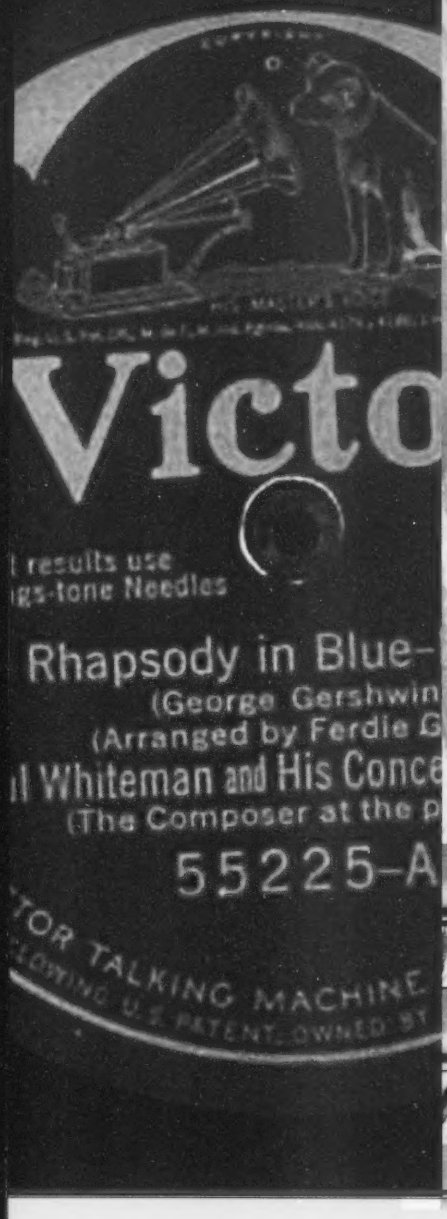
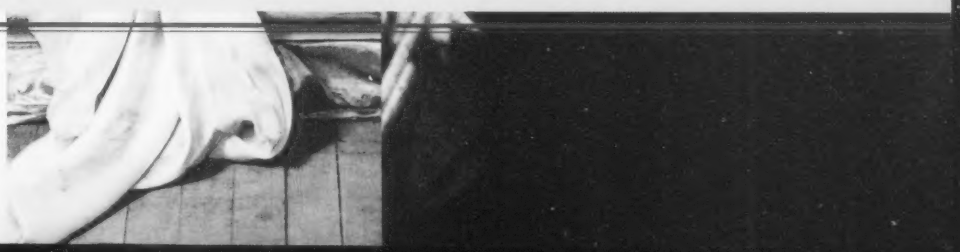


**From left: The first recording of "Rhapsody in Blue," performed by Paul Whiteman and his Concert Orchestra June 10, 1924. *University of California, Santa Barbara*; Nora Bayes as Juliet in the burlesque of "Romeo and Juliet," 1920. *New York World-Telegram and the Sun Newspaper Photograph Collection, Prints and Photographs Division; Gramophone image courtesy Stoon;* Evangelist Homer Alvan Rodeheaver (1880-1955), who was also a music director and publisher. *Flickr Commons project, 2011, Prints and Photographs Division***

# THE NATIONAL JUKEBOX

A WEBSITE OF HISTORIC MUSIC



STEINWAY

# NATIONAL JUKEBOX LAUNCHED

## A Music Box from the Dawn of Recording

By MARK HARTSELL

The Library of Congress on May 10 launched the "National Jukebox," an interactive website that allows users to play thousands of historic sound recordings—many of them unavailable to the public for more than a century.

The National Jukebox provides access to more than 10,000 out-of-print recordings of opera, popular music, comedy, religious music and political speeches produced by the Victor Talking Machine Co. in the first decades of the 20th century.

The jukebox is the result of collaboration between the Library and Sony Music Entertainment—the company owns the rights to the recordings and licensed them to the Library—and represents the largest collection of historic sound recordings ever made available free of charge to the public.

The site is available at **www.loc.gov/jukebox/**.

"This amazing collection is a chance to hear history," Librarian of Congress James H. Billington said. "This collection includes popular music, dance music, opera, early jazz, famous speeches, poetry and humor. It is what our grandparents and great-grandparents listened to, danced to, sang along with."

Said Richard Story, president of the Commercial Music Group at Sony: "We are thrilled to be joining with the Library of Congress to launch the National Jukebox. As the steward of much of the output from the American recording industry prior to 1934, Sony Music is excited to preserve and share online these important cultural treasures from its archives with students, historians and music-lovers alike."

A crowd gathered in the Members Room of the Jefferson Building for a press conference that featured a video of a 9-year-old boy playing a duet of "I'm Just Wild About Harry" with Eubie Blake, the jazz pianist who composed that song and whose work is included on the jukebox.

With that, Harry Connick Jr. entered the room to talk about the importance of preserving the nation's musical heritage—and to reprise the tune he had played with Blake for the cameras 35 years earlier.

"To have these songs preserved in this capacity ... to ensure that new generations have access to these treasures is really heartwarming and inspirational to me," said Connick, an actor and Grammy-winning singer and pianist. "I was lucky: I grew up with it firsthand.

*continued on page 405*

**Left, Harry Connick Jr. performs "I'm Just Wild About Harry" at the Library of Congress.** ***Photo by Abby Brack***

**Geraldine Farrar as "Madame Butterfly"** ***George Grantham Bain Collection, Prints and Photographs Division***

## Making Records in the Acoustical Era

The recordings of the acoustical era—the 1890s to 1925—were created by mechanical means without the use of microphones or electrical amplification.

Musicians, singers and speakers performed in front of a flared metal horn that gathered sound waves and funneled them to a thin diaphragm at the small end of the horn. The energy of the sound waves caused the diaphragm to vibrate, and the vibrations caused an attached stylus to etch the waves onto a wax rotating cylinder or disc.

Record makers had no electronic tone controls to alter the sound—all adjustments were made by changing the performer's position relative to the horn or by trying horns of different sizes or diaphragms of different thickness.

To play back the recording, the process was reversed. A steel needle or, for cylinders, a sapphire was affixed to an encased diaphragm—called a sound box or reproducer—attached to a tapering tube known as a tone arm.

The motion of the needle moving over a cylinder or disc caused the diaphragm to vibrate and create sound waves that were conducted through the tone arm.

Performers used a great deal of ingenuity to create a successful recording, moving away from the horn for louder and higher notes to prevent distortion and toward the horn to prevent under-recording of soft sounds. Such movements, however, could distort the dynamics intended by the composer.

The acoustical recording process could capture only a limited range of audio frequencies—about 100 to 2,500 Hz.

Banjos, trumpets, trombones and tenor and baritone voices reproduced best—a constraint that influenced the repertoire of early recordings. When acoustic recording improved later on, the repertoire expanded.

*—Mark Hartsell*

**Paul Whiteman and his Palais Royal Orchestra welcome violinist Maurice Hughes. Whiteman was a seminal figure in both recording and American jazz.** ***George Grantham Bain Collection, Prints and Photographs Division***

Al Jolson, was the toast of Broadway at the height of his career. *New York World-Telegram and the Sun Newspaper Photograph Collection, Prints and Photographs Division*

## Classic Performances from the Early Years of Recorded Music

The National Jukebox makes available to the public for the first time in more than a century some of the earliest recordings of ragtime, jazz, Broadway shows, vaudeville and the biggest stars of the early Metropolitan Opera.

The collection of out-of-print recordings by the Victor Talking Machine Co. reflects an enormous range not only of genres but also of the musicians, singers and composers who in the first decades of the 20th century helped build the recording industry.

The jukebox includes, for example, more than 170 performances by Enrico Caruso, the great operatic tenor whose voice, it is said, helped create a mass market for recorded music.

Other artists on the jukebox made recordings that represent momentous musical firsts.

The Original Dixieland Jazz Band in February 1917 recorded the first jazz sides in music history, "Livery Stable Blues" and "Dixie Jass Band One-Step." The jukebox includes those recordings and 18 others by the group—among them, classics such as "Tiger Rag" and "St. Louis Blues."

George W. Johnson, the first African-American ever to make a record, cut several sides for Victor in the early 20th century. Two of them—"The Whistling Girl" and "The Laughing Song"—reside among the nearly 10,000 vocal, instrumental and spoken-word recordings on the jukebox.

The work of many other singers, musicians and composers—some still well known, many long forgotten—also is here: John Philip Sousa, the master of the march; Al Jolson, who later revolutionized the movies with his early sound film "The Jazz Singer"; Billy Murray, a singer of comic songs who was the most-recorded artist of the era; Nora Bayes, one of Broadway's biggest stars and the co-writer of the classic "Shine on Harvest Moon"; and Bert Williams and George Walker, two Broadway stars immensely popular with both black and white audiences, whose work provides precious examples of African-American musical comedy.

Collectively, the jukebox recordings provide a soundtrack to the lives of the first generation of Americans able to drop a needle on a record and listen to music.

"These recordings comprise thousands of compelling performances covering a breathtaking array of genres and styles," said David Sager, a curator in the Recorded Sound Section. "Offered up are the biggest musical stars of the early 20th century, whose artistry shines through the challenging recording techniques of the day.

"There was no editing, overdubbing or digital tuning—and no microphone, either. Remember, these were the days of acoustical recording where the artist performed in front of a large recording horn."

*—Mark Hartsell*

**Right, the Original Dixieland Jazz (or "Jass") Band, five musicians from New Orleans, recorded "That Teasin' Rag" in 1917.** ***Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division***

## INTERACTIVE OPERA: THE VICTROLA BOOK OF THE OPERA

The National Jukebox features an interactive version of an early 20th-century guide to opera recordings that allows users to read the book's summaries of opera plots, view photographs of performers in costume and listen to almost every recording listed.

The 1919 edition of The Victrola Book of the Opera describes more than 110 operas and lists recordings of excerpts from those works offered that year by the Victor Talking Machine Co. The book was published in 13 editions between 1912 and 1976 as part of a strategy to promote the sale of recordings of opera excerpts produced by Victor.

For 75 cents, buyers of the 1919 edition could learn the plot and production history of popular operas, check out photos of performers in character and illustrations of scenes from the productions, and keep a handy a list of catalog numbers for Victor recordings.

Most of the recordings found in The Victrola Book of the Opera are part of the jukebox. The interactive version of the book on the jukebox allows users to do something readers of the original couldn't: listen to the recordings as they read about them and instantly compare different interpretations of the most popular arias of the era.

The book listed selections by stars from Victor's premier Red Seal label—Enrico Caruso, John McCormack, Geraldine Farrar—as well as performances by bands and singers from the company's lower-priced labels, such as Victor Herbert's Orchestra and "house" vocalists Harry Macdonough, Reinald Werrenrath and Elizabeth Wheeler.

Early editions of the book were compiled by sales catalog editor Samuel Holland Rous, who, billed as "S. H. Dudley," began his career with Victor as a vocalist.

William Braid White, reviewing the 1924 edition of the book, noted the smart use of the guide as a marketing tool.

"The Victor Book of the Opera is not only a fine piece of artistic propaganda, but a very shrewd piece of publicity," White wrote, "and the best of it is that every party to it reaps a profit from its existence."

"The interactive Victrola Book of the Opera is a fabulous research tool for musicians, scholars and collectors," said David Sager, a curator in the Recorded Sound Section. "To be able to compare the same arias as sung by baritones like Antonio Scotti and Emilio De Gogorza or the sopranos Luisa Tetrazzini and Marcella Sembrich offers a plethora of convenience, insight and pleasure."

—Mark Hartsell

**Left, Italian tenor Enrico Caruso, in costume for operatic role, 1908. *A. Dupont, Prints and Photographs Division*; and a recording of his aria "Celeste Aida," from Verdi's opera, "Aida." *Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division. Gramophone image courtesy Stoon***

*continued from page 401*

But I look at my kids—that they have a technological way, a vehicle to get these songs is absolutely imperative."

Connick then sat at the piano to perform "Wild About Harry," a tune, he said, that meant a lot to his family—the song served as the campaign theme for his father, a longtime district attorney in New Orleans.

The version of "Wild About Harry" on the jukebox, performed by the Paul Whiteman Orchestra, dates from 1922, a later example of the work collected in the archive.

The music in the jukebox spans little more than two decades—from 1901 to 1925—but covers an enormous range of genres, from jazz to ragtime to Broadway to vaudeville to opera.

The collection includes, for example, Ziegfeld Follies star Fanny Brice singing "My Man," Enrico Caruso performing arias from "Tosca" when the opera still was new, and the Original Dixieland Jazz Band blowing on the first jazz record ever released, "Livery Stable Blues."

Some of the recorded sounds aren't musical at all. They include readings from the Bible, recitations of popular poems such as "Casey at the Bat" and novelty recordings of snores and sneezes.

Other recordings document the words of important political figures: The jukebox includes speeches by Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, William Jennings Bryan and William Howard Taft.

"The absence of these recordings for so many decades has created a kind of cultural amnesia for this kind of material—it's been out of circulation and forgotten," said Patrick Loughney, chief of the Packard Campus. "This is an effort of archaeology ... that the library has undertaken."

Library staffers created annotated playlists of songs focused on different genres, periods, themes and artists. The site also allows users to create playlists and post them to their own web pages or submit them for posting on the jukebox.

The recordings, however, cannot be downloaded.

The site also showcases thousands of label images, record-catalog illustrations, artist bios and an interactive facsimile of the 1919 "Victrola Book of the Opera," an early guide to opera recordings.

Abby Brack

**Harry Connick Jr. speaks during the launch of the Library's National Jukebox website.**

The University of California Santa Barbara (UCSB) will catalog and control the site's metadata for its online "Encyclopedic Discography of Victor Records" at **http://victor.library.ucsb.edu/.**

The Library's association with the university provides users with an easily searchable database of all jukebox recordings.

Gene DeAnna, head of the Recorded Sound Section, and his predecessor, Sam Brylawski, first proposed such a website nearly four years ago. Sony, because of its ownership of Victor and Columbia records, clearly was the company with which they needed to work, DeAnna said.

The announcement on Tuesday marked the culmination of almost three years of work by Library staff to make that proposal a reality—more than a year to negotiate the agreement with Sony followed by more than a year to digitize recordings, scan images and develop the website.

Packard staff began work on the recordings in March 2010, eventually digitizing more than 5,000 discs. (The rest of the recordings were contributed by UCSB and digitized by a company in Seattle.)

Around the same time, Packard staff met with an Office of Strategic Initiatives web team led by Bill Kellum to plan the jukebox website.

"The Recorded Sound Section team worked incredibly hard to get this project done while at the same time carrying on all of the other assignments, routine or otherwise, that came their way over the past 18 months," DeAnna said. "From the start, the team in the Library's Office of Strategic Initiatives was ready to be innovative to make this site something special and was willing to try some things that had never been done before here."

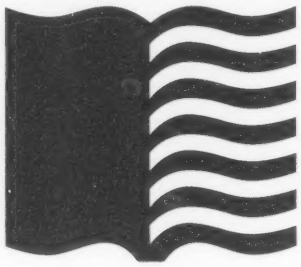
DeAnna demonstrated the site's features for the crowd in the Members Room, showing, for example, how the opera book allows users to compare different versions of the same music—he contrasted Caruso's "Bella figlia dell'amore" from "Rigoletto" with renditions by a solo accordion and a saxophone sextet.

"It's just amazing," Connick said. "I can't get over it."

This, DeAnna hopes, is just a good beginning: The Library plans to add more Victor recordings and titles of the same era drawn from other Sony-owned labels, such as Columbia and Okeh.

"The true significance of this project," he said, "is that it makes available to a worldwide audience a vast collection of music and spoken recordings that have fallen from our collective cultural memory, bringing them back onto our soundscape in ways that only digital technology can." ◆

*Mark Hartsell is editor of the Gazette, the Library's staff newsletter.*



# LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

## IN THE NEWS

By ERIN ALLEN

Within the first two days of its launch on May 10, the Library's new National Jukebox website was visited by more than 1 million people. *(See story on page 399.)* Within a week, visitors racked up more than 600,000 plays of pre-1925 music tracks licensed for the Library for public streaming by Sony Music Entertainment. Needless to say, media outlets also shared in the excitement of the Library's new endeavor.

"No wonder people are interested," said Will Friedwald of **The Wall Street Journal**. "The first 25 years of the 20th century represent the birth of jazz, the blues, the Broadway musical, the big band, country music, pop singing and the Great American Songbook, not to mention a golden age of opera and a flowering of ethnic music."

The **Los Angeles Times** spoke with Chris Sampson, associate dean of the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music, who said, "This really blows the top off a lot of stuff, doesn't it? There are so many angles from an academic perspective of how this would be a resource. The ability to be able to go to the source so students can see the tradition of American music and American songwriting, to see this lineage and to be able to draw upon it is going to be enormous … To me that's just gold."

"The fact of this National Jukebox, and the way in which a listener can conjure up the sound of a century ago and stream it for free, is quite amazing, and there's so much material available for both casual listening and scholarly mining," said Anastasia Tsioulcas of **National Public Radio's** music blog, "Deceptive Cadence."

On her MSNBC show, **Rachel Maddow** named the jukebox the "Best New Thing in the World Today" for May 11. "It is so cool," she said. "Beyond some incredible music you never would have heard otherwise, you can also browse through their categories, things like 'humorous monologues,' 'political speeches,' 'yodeling,' 'whistling.'"

**The Atlantic** made a list of the nine best recordings, naming "Livery Stable Blues" (1917) by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band as the number one track.

Other national outlets running stories were **The Washington Post, The New York Times, Voice of America, ABC News, USA Today, the Associated Press, Agence France Presse** and **Fox News.**

Tom Sherwood of local NBC affiliate **WRC Washington** himself admitted the "cool" factor of the National Jukebox, particularly the opportunity to see Harry Connick Jr., who came to the Library for the website's debut. "It was a dramatic example of music in America and the perfect backdrop for a new undertaking," said Sherwood.

Other local outlets, such as **Roll Call** and **WTOP**, also reported the announcement.

The news didn't stop there however. Outlets across the nation—in Tennessee, New Jersey, California, Kentucky, Colorado, Minnesota and Pennsylvania, to name a few—expressed excitement over the jukebox.

On the Internet, popular blogs from **Gothamist** to **Gizmodo** also featured brief stories. **Crawdaddy.com** proclaimed the National Jukebox "off the chain, son!"

Development of the National Jukebox involved the Library's Packard Campus for Audio Visual Conservation in Culpeper, Va. Reporter Michael Gaynor took a tour of the facility and wrote about the work being done there for the April issue of **Washingtonian**.

"Every movie, every TV show, every record you can think of is kept within its underground hallways, fluorescent-lit cement tunnels as long as football fields," said Gaynor. "In a sparse white serve-room, the hum of hard drives illustrates the future of audiovisual conservation. Robotic arms whir and rotate inside massive servers, maintaining a system that currently stores more than a petabyte of cultural history—more than 4,000 computers worth of data collected in just three years."

Gaynor also focused on some of the facility's labs, including the Live Capture Room, which when completed will record up to 120 television channels in real time, and undertake specific projects like preserving nitrate film.

Prior to the launch of the National Jukebox, Randy Lewis of **The Los Angeles Times** wrote a feature on the Packard Campus and its notable collections.

"The long hallway can also spark images of the closing scene in 'Raiders of the Lost Ark,' although it's not a single airplane hangar-sized room full of crates packed with who-knows-what treasures. Instead, the second-floor hallway leads past 17 vaults, each of which yields shelf after shelf filled with platters of vinyl, shellac or wax or magnetic tape in various formats," he said.

Speaking of music, the Library is also home to the ASCAP Collection. Since acquiring the organization's archives in 2009, members of the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers Foundation have put on a concert annually at the Library, performing popular selections from the collection and telling the stories behind them. **The Washington Post, Roll Call** and **Politico** were on hand for the May 10 concert. *(See story on page 416.)*

"No particular agenda was outlined at the ASCAP Foundation's concert at the Library of Congress, which drew the likes of Nancy Pelosi and Debbie Wasserman Schultz—just a celebration, said ASCAP prez Paul Williams, of 'the strong bond between those who write the songs and those who write the laws,'" said the Post's Reliable Source. ◆

*Erin Allen is a writer-editor in the Office of Communications.*

Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division

**Emile Berliner filed a patent for this microphone, with mouthpiece added, April 1877.**

# Father of the Gramophone

## Emile Berliner and the Birth of Recording

By AUDREY FISCHER

German-born inventor Emile Berliner (1851-1929) could not have imagined a National Jukebox of some 10,000 audio recordings produced in the U.S. between the years 1901 and 1925, which are now freely available online—courtesy of the Library of Congress and Sony Music Entertainment. *(See story on page 399.)*

But the virtual jukebox would not have been possible without Berliner's pioneering work in the field of recorded sound.

One week after the May 10 launch of the National Jukebox (**www.loc.gov/jukebox/**) an audience gathered at the Library to learn about Berliner's life and work.

The program was sponsored jointly by the Hebraic Section of the African Middle Eastern Division and the Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division, in which the Berliner Papers are housed. The collection comprises some 1,000 manuscript items and several hundred rare sound recordings produced by the Berliner Gramophone Company at the turn of the last century.

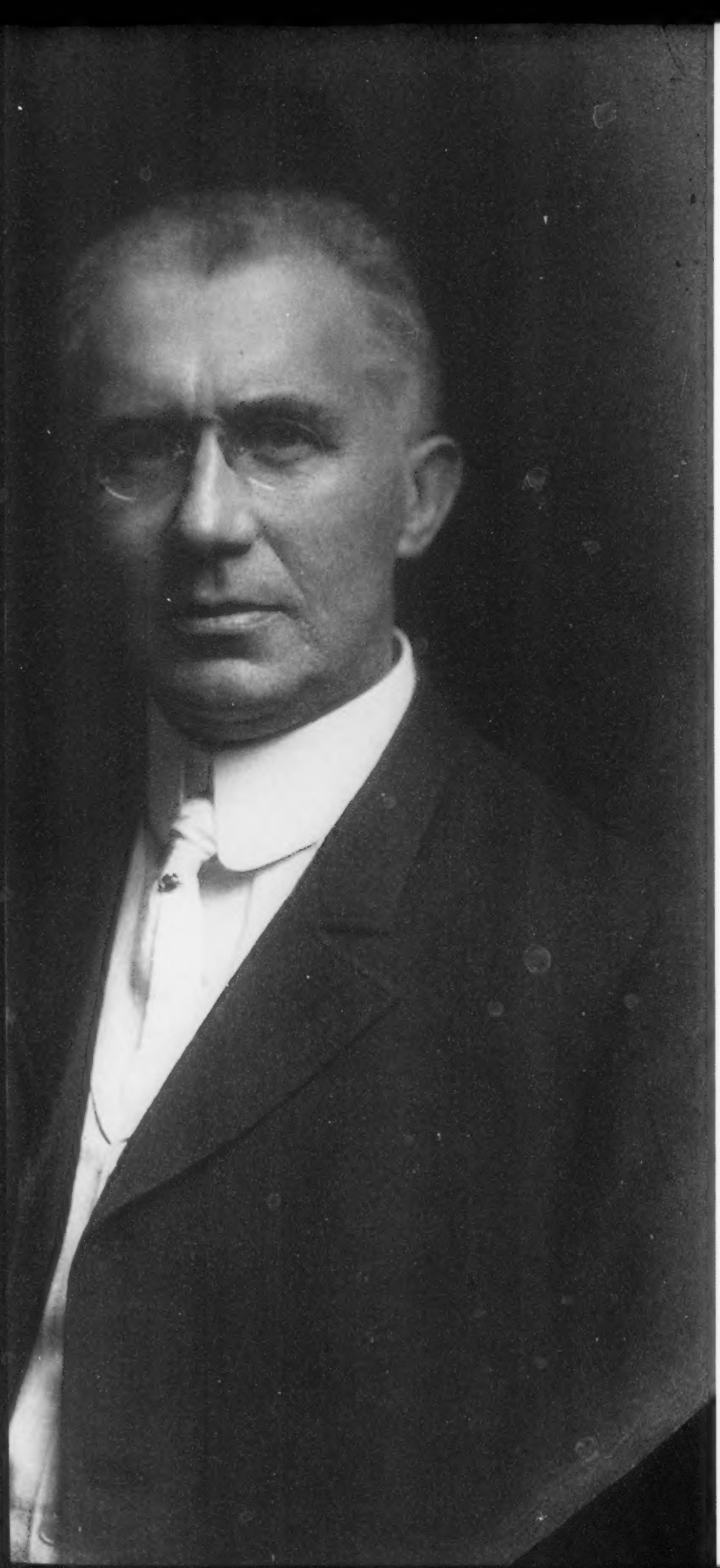
"Emile Berliner was a Renaissance man," said Sharon Horowitz of the Hebraic Section. Known mostly for his invention of the gramophone, Berliner was a composer, acoustician, aviation pioneer, public-health advocate and Zionist—to name a few of his interests.

The scope of Berliner's intellectual pursuits is well-documented on the Library's American Memory website in a presentation titled "Emile Berliner and the Birth of the Recording Industry" (**http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/berlhtml/berlhome.html**).

Karen Lund, a digital project coordinator in the Library's Music Division who developed the presentation with other Library staff members, presented an overview of the site, which contains more than 400 items from the Emile Berliner Papers and 118 sound recordings.

In addition to the digitized items, the online presentation offers biographical information about Berliner, including a timeline and family tree; background about the early recording industry, including the work of Berliner's contemporaries, Thomas Edison and Alexander Graham Bell; and detailed information about the collection of papers and recordings.

"The Library's Berliner web presentation makes it easy for me to tap the wonderful resources in the collection,"



said Samuel Brylawski, who spoke about Berliner's life and his contributions to the recording industry.

Brylawski, former head of the Recorded Sound Section at the Library of Congress, is the coordinator and editor of the Victor Records Discography at the University of California at Santa Barbara. The goal of the project is to develop an online encyclopedia of all the recordings made by the Victor Talking Machine Company between 1900 and 1950.

Born in Hanover, Germany, in 1851, Berliner immigrated to America in 1870 where he had an opportunity to clerk in a dry-goods store in Washington, D.C.

"Washington, D.C., was the center of invention at that time, as the home of the Patent Office and the Smithsonian Institution," said Brylawski.

Berliner moved to New York, where he attended Cooper Union College and later worked in the laboratory of Constantine Fahlberg, the chemist who discovered saccharine. This experience in a research laboratory undoubtedly spurred his desire to pursue a career in science, research and invention.

Berliner's subsequent return to Washington in 1876 was fortuitous. It was the year of the nation's centennial, which was marked by demonstrations of various technological advances. Among these was Alexander Graham Bell's telephone.

Upon seeing the instrument demonstrated, Berliner set about fashioning and patenting a new type of transmitter (microphone) which he called a "loose-contact" transmitter. The newly-formed American Bell Telephone Company hired him as a research assistant and sent him to Boston, where he met and married Cora Adler and became an American citizen. He left the company in 1884 to return to Washington to pursue his dream of becoming a private inventor.

Berliner began to take a great interest in the future of sound recording and reproduction. He began by examining in detail both the phonograph (developed by Thomas Edison) and the graphophone (developed by Chichester Bell and Charles Sumner Tainter) in order to learn the advantages and disadvantages of each.

It was Berliner who made the transition from Edison's wax cylinders to flat, double-sided zinc discs with spiral grooves that could be traced using a

**Inventor Emile Berliner**

Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division

needle or stylus. Not only did this improve sound quality, but the flat discs could be mass-produced at a much lower cost than Edison's cylinders.

"From the beginning, Berliner saw it as a home-entertainment device," said Brylawski, "while others focused solely on its office use for dictation."

On Nov. 8, 1887, Berliner was granted a patent for the gramophone, a device to record and reproduce sounds.

Not only did Berliner produce recordings of popular favorites like John Philip Sousa's "Stars and Stripes Forever," he even composed and recorded some of his own tunes, like the "Columbian Anthem," in honor of his adopted nation's capital. These and other sounds were recorded by Berliner's Columbia Records company, the oldest surviving brand name in pre-recorded sound (now owned by Sony).

On a trip to Germany in 1889, Berliner demonstrated his gramophone and made an agreement with the toy firm of Kammerer and Reinhardt for the production of little toy discs and hand-turned players. Returning to America, Berliner entered into an agreement with several New York backers and together they formed the little-known American Gramophone Company, followed by the more lucrative United States Gramophone Company in Washington, D.C.

Gramophone companies soon were launched in Philadelphia and New York to handle the distribution of Berliner's discs and machines, and the market also began to expand throughout Europe. To improve the playback speed, Berliner worked with Eldridge R. Johnson's machine shop in Camden, N.J., to manufacture machines with spring motors. Johnson also came up with the idea of putting labels on the discs.

On Sept. 29, 1897, a fire broke out at Berliner's Washington, D.C., factory. The following year was marked by the beginning of illegal competition and patent disputes that would bring down the company. In June 1900, a court injunction shut down the Berliner Gramophone Company of Philadelphia and left Emile Berliner with no way to operate.

Berliner passed his patent rights to Johnson, who formed the Victor Talking Machine Company, in which Berliner retained a financial interest. The forerunner of RCA Victor, the company produced many of the early recordings now accessible on the National Jukebox.

A man of ideas, Berliner turned his attention to powered flight. With his son Henry, he developed a gyro motor for use in the helicopter.

Berliner also became involved in political and social issues such as Zionism and public health. He was a tireless advocate for purifying milk to address the high mortality rate of babies and young children. He even helped develop a children's book titled "Muddy Jim," a compilation of rhymes illustrating what happens to children who neglect cleanliness.

A year before his death, Berliner expressed his final wishes to his wife in a letter dated May 9, 1928, which reflected his humanitarian nature:

"When I go I do not want an expensive funeral. Elaborate funerals are almost a criminal waste of money. … Give some money to some poor mothers with babies and bury me about sunset. I am grateful for having lived in the United States and I say to my children and grandchildren that peace of mind is what they should strive for." ◆

Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division

**The window display of the T. Eaton Co. Ltd. in Toronto, features Berliner's gramophone.**

## Library Resources on Recording History

For more information, visit "Emile Berliner and the Birth of the Recording Industry" http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/berlhtml/berlhome.html.

The following web presentations are drawn from the Library's Alexander Graham Bell Family Papers and its collection of Thomas Alva Edison's motion pictures, disc sound recordings and other related materials:

"Alexander Graham Bell Family Papers at the Library of Congress" http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/bellhtml/bellhome.html

"Inventing Entertainment: The Early Motion Pictures and Sound Recordings of the Edison Companies" http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/edhtml/edhome.html

For more information on some of the late 19th-century music featured on Emile Berliner's recordings, visit the following web presentations:

"Historic American Sheet Music, 1850-1920" http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/award97/ncdhtml/hasmhome.html

"Music for the Nation: American Sheet Music, 1870-1885" http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/smhtml/smhome.html

"America Singing: Nineteenth-Century Song Sheets" http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amsshtml/amsshome.html

# Grammy-Winning Research

## In Folklife Archive, Musicians Find Inspiration

By ERIN ALLEN

The Grammy Award goes to the Library of Congress, in a manner of speaking. Materials in the Library's American Folklife Center (AFC) repeatedly have been the inspiration for Grammy Award nominees and winners.

Most recently, the 2011 Grammy Awards gave two nominations to Harte Recordings' "Alan Lomax in Haiti," a 10-CD box set chronicling Lomax's 1936 Haitian recording expedition for the Library of Congress.

In addition, AFC recordings influenced the music of two of the acts honored.

The Carolina Chocolate Drops, whose album "Genuine Negro Jig" won in the Traditional Folk category, previously have recorded selections they learned from the center's Archive of Folk Culture—band member Dom Flemons is a frequent visitor.

"The Library of Congress archives have always been there in our minds, in an abstract way," said Flemons.

In particular, Flemons has conducted research using the Lomax field recordings and the Deep River Song Collection. The Library "has such a diversity of American music."

Of his own music, Flemons said he restyles some of what he's found in the archive but tries not to "mess with perfection."

"I want to have elements of the original and recognize the culture it came from," he said.

The group Feufollet's album "En Couleurs" was nominated for best Cajun or Zydeco recording. That band likewise has covered music learned from the center's archival recordings.

According to the AFC's Stephen Winick, Feufollet is the second Cajun group to win a Grammy award after being inspired by the Library's materials. Beausoleil, the only Cajun band to win a Grammy before the Cajun/Zydeco category was established in 2008, has recorded several songs that can be traced back to the AFC's archive, including "Belle" and "Je m'endors."

Courtesy of Carolina Chocolate Drops

**Members of the band Carolina Chocolate Drops are, from left, Dom Flemons, Adam Matta, Rhiannon Giddens and Hubby Jenkins.**

Laying the groundwork for this tradition were such performers as Burl Ives, Pete Seeger, Woody Guthrie, Jelly Roll Morton and Lead Belly (Huddie Ledbetter), who worked with John and Alan Lomax, the father-and-son team that oversaw what was then the Archive of American Folk Song.

They learned songs from the archive and in return sang their own songs for the Library's recording devices.

"The most extensive set of recordings devoted to any one performer in that era was captured on the stage of the Coolidge Auditorium in 1938, when Alan Lomax recorded over nine hours of music and speech from Jelly Roll Morton, a pioneering jazz pianist," Winick said. "The recordings amount to a musical oral history documenting the birth of jazz."

Those recordings were released on CD in 2005 and won two Grammy Awards for historical album and

Stephen Winick

**Members of the Grammy-nominated group Feufollet visit the American Folklife Center Reading Room in 2006.**

liner notes.

"One of the biggest hits learned from the archive was 'Tom Dooley,' a traditional North Carolina ballad that became a No. 1 hit for the Kingston Trio in 1958, also winning best Country-and-Western performance at the very first Grammy Awards," Winick said. "By all accounts, the Kingston Trio's version was ultimately based on the performance of Frank Proffitt, which was recorded by collectors Frank and Anne Warner in 1940 and donated to the AFC archive.

"The song is credited with starting a 'folk boom' that led to the thriving folk scene of the '60s and '70s."

The American Folklife Center collections also have had a resounding influence on rock music.

In 1964, the British rock group The Animals released the track "The House of the Rising Sun," which quickly topped the charts all over the world.

"It was also an early example of a No. 1 rock hit created from a traditional folksong, prompting some to label it 'the first folk-rock hit,' " Winick said. The song went on to be honored with a Grammy Hall of Fame Award in 1999.

According to Winick, the consensus is that The Animals copied the version of the song found on Bob Dylan's debut album. Dylan acknowledged Dave Van Ronk as his source, and Van Ronk acknowledged Hally Wood, who took her version from Alan Lomax's book "Our Singing Country."

"That version was transcribed in large part from a performance Lomax recorded for the archive in 1937 from a Kentucky miner's daughter named Georgia Turner," Winick said.

The recordings in the Archive of Folk Culture continue to resonate among musicians of the 21st century.

In 2006, Bruce Springsteen released "We Shall Overcome: The Seeger Sessions," an entire album of traditional folk songs learned from the popular folk musician. The album won the 2007 Grammy for Traditional Folk Album.

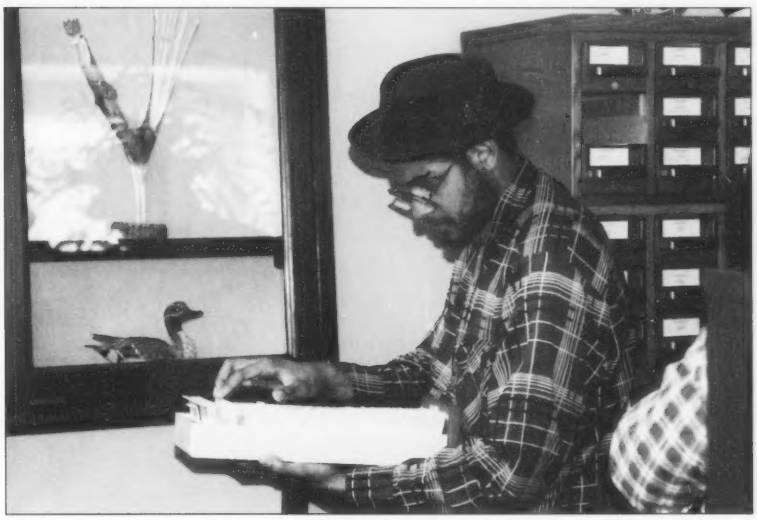
"Seeger learned many of his songs from the archive," Winick said. "In the 1930s, he was the archive's first intern, working as an assistant to Alan Lomax."

Canadian musician Feist and the legendary Springsteen have released music directly related to the collections, and both have been honored for it.

In November 2005, Feist visited the American Folklife Center's reading room, where she heard the children's song "Sea Lion Woman," recorded for the Library of Congress by Herbert Halpert in 1939 and featuring sisters Christine and Katherine Shipp.

Taken by the song, Feist cut the track for her 2007 album "The Reminder," which was nominated for a Grammy and won a Juno Award.

"It's unique using those old styles, especially since they've all but disappeared," Flemons said. "It's important to find the cultural significance of a song and find a way to keep that." ◆



Stephen Winick

**Dom Flemons of the Grammy-winning group Carolina Chocolate Drops uses the card catalog in the American Folklife Center Reading Room.**

*Erin Allen is a writer-editor in the Office of Communications.*

# From Broadway to Independence Ave.

## Library Acquires Oliver Smith's Set Designs

By ERIN ALLEN

Oliver Smith's creative touch was at the heart of some of America's most notable and beloved theater productions, including "My Fair Lady," "The Sound of Music," "Camelot" and "Hello, Dolly!"

A master of colors and styles, his vivid watercolor paintings and imaginative renderings literally set the stage for these historic musicals. The Library has acquired his theatrical design collection, and a selection of gems was put on show recently in the Whittall Pavilion.

"The acquisition of the Oliver Smith Collection of Theatrical Design constitutes a major expansion of the Library's holdings in theatrical design," said Walter Zvonchenko of the Music Division. "It's a major building block in structuring the Library as an institution with a full spectrum of formats for theatrical research."

Items in the collection include watercolors of stage backdrops and sets, ground plans, ink sketches and elevations for both realized productions and those that never saw the spotlight.

"The material provides a historical background to the development of design for a given production, as well as the final scheme," said Zvonchenko. "Some of the ground plans provide an opportunity to compare scenic presentation for the same production in different theaters.

"A few years ago, a researcher came in with a question about 'My Fair Lady'—specifically the location of a staircase in Henry Higgins' home," he recalled. "He was concerned how the placement would affect his theatrical production." Now, thanks to the Oliver Smith Collection, researchers can study Smith's blueprints and renderings to better inform their own stage design.

Perusing the paintings and sketches, recognizable titles immediately pop out—"Gigi," "Guys and Dolls" and "West Side Story"—along with lesser-known productions and failures like "Flahooley," a satire targeting big business and conformity; "Jimmy," based on the book "Beau James" by Gene Fowler; and "Dear World," based on the Jean Giraudoux play "The Madwoman of Chaillot."

" 'Flahooley' is an oddity in that Smith signed the designs but listed credit is given to Howard Bay," said Zvonchenko.

According to Zvonchenko, the collection is vast, with thousands of pieces, and much is still waiting to be processed at the Library's storage facilities in Landover. Some of the items are not identified, which is rare, he said. He's hoping that as the collection is being used, researchers will be able to shed some light on such materials.

"Even with the well-known pieces, it's wonderful to have researchers come in and relate some information," said Zvonchenko.

Smith was one of the most highly regarded and sought-after stage designers of the 20th century. His professional circles included the likes of Aaron Copland, Rodgers and Hammerstein, Jerry Herman and Irving Berlin—all of whose papers are in the custody of the Library.

One of the Library's larger collections in musical theater is the Leonard Bernstein Collection. Smith worked with Bernstein on many occasions—for both dance and musical productions—and on "Mass," a piece commissioned by Jacqueline Kennedy that premiered at the John F. Kennedy Center in 1971.

Not only did Smith design for musicals, but he also contributed rich artful conceptions for plays, opera and dance. Among Smith's contributions for plays were sets for "Auntie Mame," "Barefoot in the Park" and "The Odd Couple." His design work in opera included "La Traviata" at the Metropolitan Opera and "Don Giovanni" for the San Francisco Opera. In dance, he conceived sets for the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and was co-director of what became the American Ballet Theatre from 1945 to 1980 and again after 1990.

One of the most iconic productions staged by the American Ballet Theatre was Agnes de Mille's "Rodeo," with music by Copland.

"It was originally staged for the Ballet Russe in 1942," said Elizabeth Aldrich, also of the Music Division. "It was moved to the Ballet Theatre in 1950."

In 1944, Smith collaborated with Bernstein and Jerome Robbins in creating "Fancy Free" for the Ballet Theatre, providing the inspiration for one of the landmark musicals of the 1940s, "On the Town," for which Smith also did the set design.

Smith was also no stranger to Hollywood, having designed the sets for film adaptations of "Guys and Dolls," "Oklahoma!" and "Porgy and Bess," to name a few.

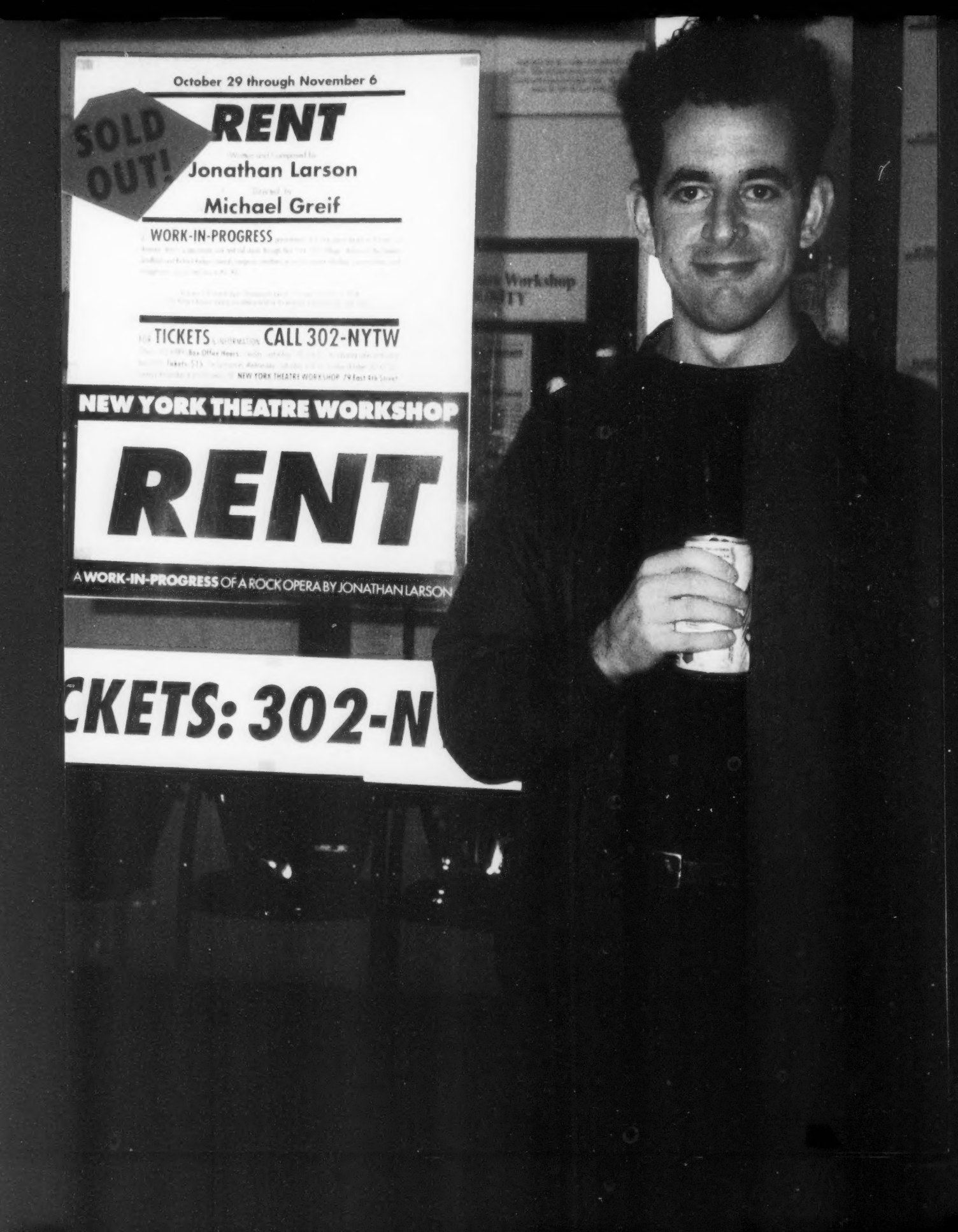
"Encompassing more than 400 productions, it is no exaggeration to say that the collection's research potential for scholars is enormous," said Zvonchenko.

Calling Smith a "sort of surrogate director," Zvonchenko noted that an important function of scenic design is its ability to determine locational focus by informing actors' movement, their entrances and exits and the space they are going to have onstage.

"The thing about Smith was how responsive he was to the specific piece and how he was able to define the production," added Zvonchenko. ◆

*Erin Allen is a writer-editor in the Office of Communications.*

**Opposite, Oliver Smith created these set designs for "My Fair Lady" (New York, 1976) and "Dumas and Son" (Los Angeles 1967).** ***Oliver Smith Collection, Music Division***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# 15 Years After 'Rent'

## Reflections on the Jonathan Larson Collection

By MARK EDEN HOROWITZ

The special collections of the Music Division of the Library of Congress include many strengths and areas of focus, but it is quite possible that American musical theater is its strongest subject area. The collections include the papers of Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin, George and Ira Gershwin, Oscar Hammerstein II, Richard Rodgers, Cole Porter, Frederick Loewe, Alan Jay Lerner, Burton Lane, Leonard Bernstein, Bob Fosse and Gwen Verdon, and dozens of others.

So it is not surprising that the Library of Congress pursued the acquisition of the Jonathan Larson papers beginning a few months after his untimely death on January 25, 1996, at the age of 35. Larson died from an aortic aneurysm (a result of Marfan Syndrome) the day before the off-Broadway opening of his now legendary rock musical "Rent." A musical adaption and update of Puccini's opera "La Bohème," the work became the ninth-longest-running musical on Broadway, earning Larson a posthumous Pulitzer Prize and three Tony awards. Two film versions have been produced and released commercially; the second being a filming of the show's closing performance on Broadway.

After consultation with Larson's mentor, composer/lyricist Stephen Sondheim (whose papers have been promised to the Library as a bequest), the Library contacted Larson's parents in July 1996. This began several years of discussions and interactions with the family, including their visit to the Library during the summer of 1997 to view its facilities and collections.

With guidance from the Library, the Larson estate hired an archivist to review the collection to organize and identify its contents. With this process completed, the collection finally arrived at the Library in February of 2004. It has since been processed and has been used by several researchers, upon request.

Though not a huge collection—it is estimated at approximately 4,000 items—the Larson papers are remarkably rich. Larson was involved in far more projects than one might assume, given his relative youth and the early stage of his career at the time of his death.

In addition to extensive documentation pertaining to "Rent," the collection includes material on 47 other projects, though not all of them were produced. Most notable among them is "tick, tick … Boom!" an autobiographical work originally performed by Larson as a one-man show. Revamped by playwright David Auburn as a three-actor piece, the play was premiered off- Broadway in 2001. Since then, the show has had a London production, an American national tour and numerous local productions.

The Larson Collection also includes more than 600 recordings (housed in the Library's Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division), many of them featuring Larson performing his works. The collection is among the first of its kind to include a significant number of computer disks containing "born digital" material—an exciting new avenue for researchers interested in the intersection of creativity and technology.

But the jewel in the crown is "Rent"—lyric sketches, numerous drafts of the script and research materials such as biographies of the fictional characters and notes and essays by Larson.

Largely hand-written, the collection also reveals Larson's hopes and dreams ("get married, have a family and become a famous composer"), a self-assessment of his special skills (ranging from "good w/ children + cats" to "composer/lyricist") and various outlines that reveal the product of an ordered mind.

Perhaps most poignant is a math worksheet that Larson devised to arrive at the figure of "525,600 minutes" that "measure a year." As every aficionado of "Rent" knows, these are lyrics from "Seasons of Love."

Though Larson had too few seasons, his legacy endures. After his death, the composer's family and friends started the Jonathan Larson Performing Arts Foundation in his memory to provide monetary grants to artists, especially musical theater composers and writers, to support their creative work. And researchers can explore his creative process in his collection housed at the Library of Congress. ◆

*Mark Eden Horowitz is a senior music specialist and curator of the Jonathan Larson Collection.*

### Remembering Larson

On Oct. 23, 2006, the Library produced a Jonathan Larson concert that featured the original musicians and musical director (Tim Weil) from "Rent" along with original cast members Anthony Rapp and Gwen Stewart. They were joined by later additions to the cast, Natascia Diaz, Jeremy Kushnier and Michael McElroy. The concert featured selections from "Rent" and other Larson works, along with songs written and performed by three of the songwriters who have received grants from the Jonathan Larson Performing Arts Foundation: Cynthia Hopkins, Joe Iconis and Steven Lutvak. Titled "American Creativity," a film of the concert will be shown at the Library on April 12, 2012, at 7 p.m.

In 2007, the Library underwrote the "Jonathan Sings Larson" CD/DVD package as part of the Songwriter Series, with support from the Ira and Leonore Gershwin Trust for the Benefit of the Library of Congress. On May 9, 2011, curator Mark Eden Horowitz discussed Larson's life and work. The program may be viewed at www.loc.gov/webcasts/

# Playing for Congress

## Songwriters Make Music at ASCAP Event

Abby Brack

**Jackie DeShannon opened the concert with a song she wrote in 1974, "Bette Davis Eyes."**

By MARK HARTSELL

Paul Williams knows all about the blood, sweat, tears and toil that go into creating a memorable piece of music.

"It all begins with a blank piece of paper," said Williams, an Oscar-winning songwriter. "You stay up half the night. You write something. You pour blood on the paper. ... You know that you have written something that is going to change the world. You get up and look at what you've written, and you realize you've rewritten "O Little Town of Bethlehem."

Williams' joke about the trials of the songwriter kicked off a program at the Library of Congress on May 10 that was much more about celebration than heartache.

The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) Foundation staged "We Write the Songs" at the Coolidge Auditorium, a night of songwriters performing their own tunes and telling the stories behind their creations—with a lot of laughs thrown in for good measure.

The event was the third staged by ASCAP at the Coolidge since the organization donated its vast papers to the Library in 2009.

ASCAP, founded in 1914, protects the rights of composers and songwriters and ensures that they are compensated for the use of their works.

The organization's membership—some 400,000 strong—includes not only current songwriters but also some of the greatest composers and songwriters of the past century of American music, from Berlin and Basie to Gershwin and Goodman.

The ASCAP Foundation, a charitable organization founded in 1975, supports songwriting through music education and talent-development programs.

Williams, president of ASCAP and the man who wrote such classic pop tunes as "Evergreen," "We've Only Just Begun" and "Rainy Days and Mondays," emceed the event.

"I wrote this song for The Carpenters—they hated it," Williams said before swinging into a few bars of "An Old Fashioned Love Song," a song that eventually found a friendlier reception with Three Dog Night and became a big hit in 1971.

Speaking to an audience filled with senators and representatives, Williams discussed the importance of the work of Congress in protecting the rights of composers. He also related an encounter between singer/songwriter Bill Withers and a congressman that, he said, illustrated the practical consequences of a lack of legislative safeguards.

"If we can't make a living writing songs, we're going to have to do

Abby Brack

**Lyle Lovett performs " If I Had a Boat" and "North Dakota"at the ASCAP event.**

something else for a living," Withers told the member. "Congressman, you do not want Ozzy Osbourne for your plumber."

Many of the congressmen present played a part in the festivities.

Sens. Saxby Chambliss (R-Ga.), John Cornyn (R-Texas) and Rand Paul (R-Ky.) and Reps. Howard L. Berman (D-Calif.), Linda T. Sanchez (D-Calif.), Adam Schiff (D-Calif.), Marlin Stutzman (R-Ind.) and Edolphus Towns (D-N.Y.) all introduced songwriters from their respective states.

"This is more fun than we're entitled to have inside the Beltway," Cornyn quipped before his introduction of Lyle Lovett later in the show.

Jackie DeShannon got things started with performances of two of her tunes, "Bette Davis Eyes" (a hit for Kim Carnes) and "Put a Little Love in Your Heart," a song she took into the top 10 in 1969.

Tom Kelly and Billy Steinberg sang their "True Colors," a No. 1 for Cyndi Lauper in 1986. Kelly then recounted their efforts to place another of their songs, "Like a Virgin," with a suitable artist—a challenge at the time, considering the subject matter.

"Everybody we played it for just looked at us like, are you kidding?" Kelly said. "In 1984, we were trying to shop the song. We wouldn't have been able to sing it for Congress, I'm sure, in 1984."

But Madonna loved it. She took what started out as a ballad and turned it into an uptempo hit that, on the Coolidge stage, presented a performance challenge Kelly solved with aplomb by channeling the Material Girl into an unlikely Smokey Robinson falsetto.

Barry Eastmond followed with "When the Going Gets Tough, the Tough Get Going" (a U.S. hit for Billy Ocean in 1986) and, with help from Freddie Jackson, "You are My Lady."

Dean Kay performed "That's Life," a song made famous by Frank Sinatra but covered by artists ranging in style from Bassey to Bono to Bublé.

Schiff, the representative from California's 29th District, provided a musical highlight of his own.

Schiff said he once watched an exasperated father try in vain to find a song that would make his young, hard-to-please daughter happy.

Schiff offered to help out, assuring the dad of his experience in dealing with tough audiences. He started singing "Ain't No Sunshine" to the girl—and to the Coolidge audience as he told the story.

The girl listened quietly until he finished the song, then nodded her head and finally spoke: "Yeah, I don't like that one, either."

Schiff introduced composer Bruce Broughton, who, accompanied by wife Belinda on violin, played a piece from the score of the film "Silverado."

Brett James, Hillary Lindsey and Gordie Sampson took a spin through "Jesus, Take the Wheel," a tune that won Carrie Underwood a Grammy for country song of the year in 2007.

Lovett talked about his uncertain journey to a career in music—"I didn't have a whole lot of direction in terms of seeking employment," he said—and performed his songs "If I Had a Boat" and "North Dakota."

The show closed with a trio of songs by lyricist Hal David, who with composer Burt Bacharach wrote a score of classics.

"I've lived my life in the shadow of a man who rhymed 'phone ya' with 'pneumonia,' " said Williams in a joking tribute to David.

David, two weeks from his 90th birthday, performed "I'll Never Fall in Love Again," a big hit for Dionne Warwick, and "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head," a song written for the film "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" that hit No. 1 and won an Academy Award.

DeShannon returned to the stage for the finale of a David-Bacharach song that she made a hit in 1965, "What the World Needs Now is Love."

"What the world needs is what you gave us," Williams told David. "Because endlessly, you always gave us love." ◆

*Mark Hartsell is editor of the Gazette, the Library's staff newsletter.*

# Imagination & Nature
## Merwin Closes Season with Ode

By DONNA URSCHEL

W.S. Merwin, at his May 4 poetry reading at the Library of Congress, told the capacity audience in the Coolidge Auditorium that he had a specific message to convey as U.S. poet laureate. It was a message concerning both the natural world and one's inner world.

"Last year, when I accepted the position of poet laureate, I was aware of the great honor," Merwin said. "But my reason, above all, to accept it was that I wanted to say something. It is a unique opportunity to say something that has been a part of my life since I was a small child. Something I couldn't put into words as a child, but something that has been a point on my compass all my life.

"It has to do with what makes us human—what distinguishes us from other species. It's not intelligence. For me, it was and always has been, without any doubt, the imagination."

Merwin said that imagination enables us to feel compassion for other people, for plants and for animals. It is the source of creativity for the arts, for the environment and for humanitarian efforts.

The poet laureate lamented: "We are now losing species every few seconds and this is irreplaceable. Climate change—largely our fault—is getting worse more rapidly than we realize. We cut down the forests of North America, and we skinned 90 million beavers for the riches of a few."

Merwin continued, "We are encouraged to value knowledge at the expense of many other parts of our world, and this becomes our arrogance. Our knowledge is wonderful and we're lucky to have it, but it's tiny, compared to what is not known.

"Nature is not something that's out there. Nature is who we are. If we forget that, then it really doesn't matter what happens to us. As long as we remember this, it matters very much."

The May 4 reading closed the 2010–11 literary season.

Merwin read 18 poems dealing with the natural world and the mysteries of life. The first one was "Nomad Flute," which begins:

*"You that sang to me once sing to me now/ let me hear your long lifted note/ survive with me/ the star is fading/…"*

"Anniversary on the Island" was his second poem. "I want to run through poems about where I've been living for nearly 40 years," said Merwin, who lives on the north side of Maui with his wife, Paula. They have raised a forest of endangered palm trees on land that used to be a ruined and barren pineapple plantation.

"I love Hawaii, and I love it more all the time. The tourist industry pushes the Mai Tais and bikinis, but that's not what's there. Hawaii is one of the last great places. It's a joy to be there," Merwin said.

His third poem was "Unwritten." The poet laureate said, "This poem is related to what I was saying about knowing and not knowing. All that we know is essential and important to us, and we do good and bad things with it. But the imagination, in all its respects, we don't know where it comes from. It comes from itself, and that's amazing."

An excerpt from "Unwritten":

*"Inside this pencil/ crouch words that have never been written/ never been spoken/ never been taught/ they're hiding/ they're awake in there/ dark in the dark/ hearing us/ …"*

*Merwin read "Yesterday," a poem about loss, which he said is another sense of the unknown. It begins: "My friend says I was not a good son/ you understand/ I say yes I understand/ he says I did not go/ to see my parents very often you know/ and I say yes I know/ even when I was living in the same city he says/ maybe I would go there once/ a month or maybe even less/ I say oh yes/ …"*

Another poem about loss followed, "The Blind Seer of Ambon," about herbalist Georg Everard Rumphius, who suffered greatly, losing his scholarly works, his wife, his daughter and his eyesight.

There were more poems about Hawaii, including "Empty Water," "Chord" and "Waking to the Rain." Merwin also read poems about language: "Losing a Language" and "Hearing the Names of the Valleys."

He read an excerpt from the book-length poem "The Folding Cliffs: A Narrative," about the Hawaiian Ko'olau, who contracted leprosy, along with his son, and refused to be isolated on Molokai.

Merwin read several recent poems, including "Convenience," "Chained to Her Leg" and "A Message to Po Chi-I."

He also read what he said were "two poems that have to do with so much in my life." One was "Witness," a very short poem, hitting on two concerns of Merwin's, nature and language:

*"I want to tell what the forests/ were like/ I will have to speak/ in a forgotten language/." The second poem was "Place," which begins, "On the last day of the world/ I would want to plant a tree."*

He ended the reading with "Waves in August" and "Rain Light." The audience, entranced by his wise and luminous words, gave the master of poetry a standing ovation. A reception and book signing followed in the Great Hall. ◆

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*Donna Urschel is a public affairs specialist in the Library's Office of Communications.*

Photo by Abby Brack

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***"Inside this pencil/ crouch words that have never been written/ never been spoken/ never been taught/ they're hiding/ they're awake in there/ dark in the dark/ hearing us/ …"***

***Merwin read "Yesterday," a poem about loss, which he said is another sense of the unknown. It begins: "My friend says I was not a good son/ you understand/ I say yes I understand/ he says I did not go/ to see my parents very often you know/ and I say yes I know/ even when I was living in the same city he says/ maybe I would go there once/ a month or maybe even less/ I say oh yes/ …"***

Another poem about loss followed, "The Blind Seer of Ambon," about herbalist Georg Everard Rumphius, who suffered greatly, losing his scholarly works, his wife, his daughter and his eyesight.

There were more poems about Hawaii, including "Empty Water," "Chord" and "Waking to the Rain." Merwin also read poems about language: "Losing a Language" and "Hearing the Names of the Valleys."

He read an excerpt from the book-length poem "The Folding Cliffs: A Narrative," about the Hawaiian Ko'olau, who contracted leprosy, along with his son, and refused to be isolated on Molokai.

Merwin read several recent poems, including "Convenience," "Chained to Her Leg" and "A Message to Po Chi-I."

He also read what he said were "two poems that have to do with so much in my life." One was "Witness," a very short poem, hitting on two concerns of Merwin's, nature and language:

***"I want to tell what the forests/ were like/ I will have to speak/ in a forgotten language/." The second poem was "Place," which begins, "On the last day of the world/ I would want to plant a tree."***

He ended the reading with "Waves in August" and "Rain Light." The audience, entranced by his wise and luminous words, gave the master of poetry a standing ovation. A reception and book signing followed in the Great Hall. ◆

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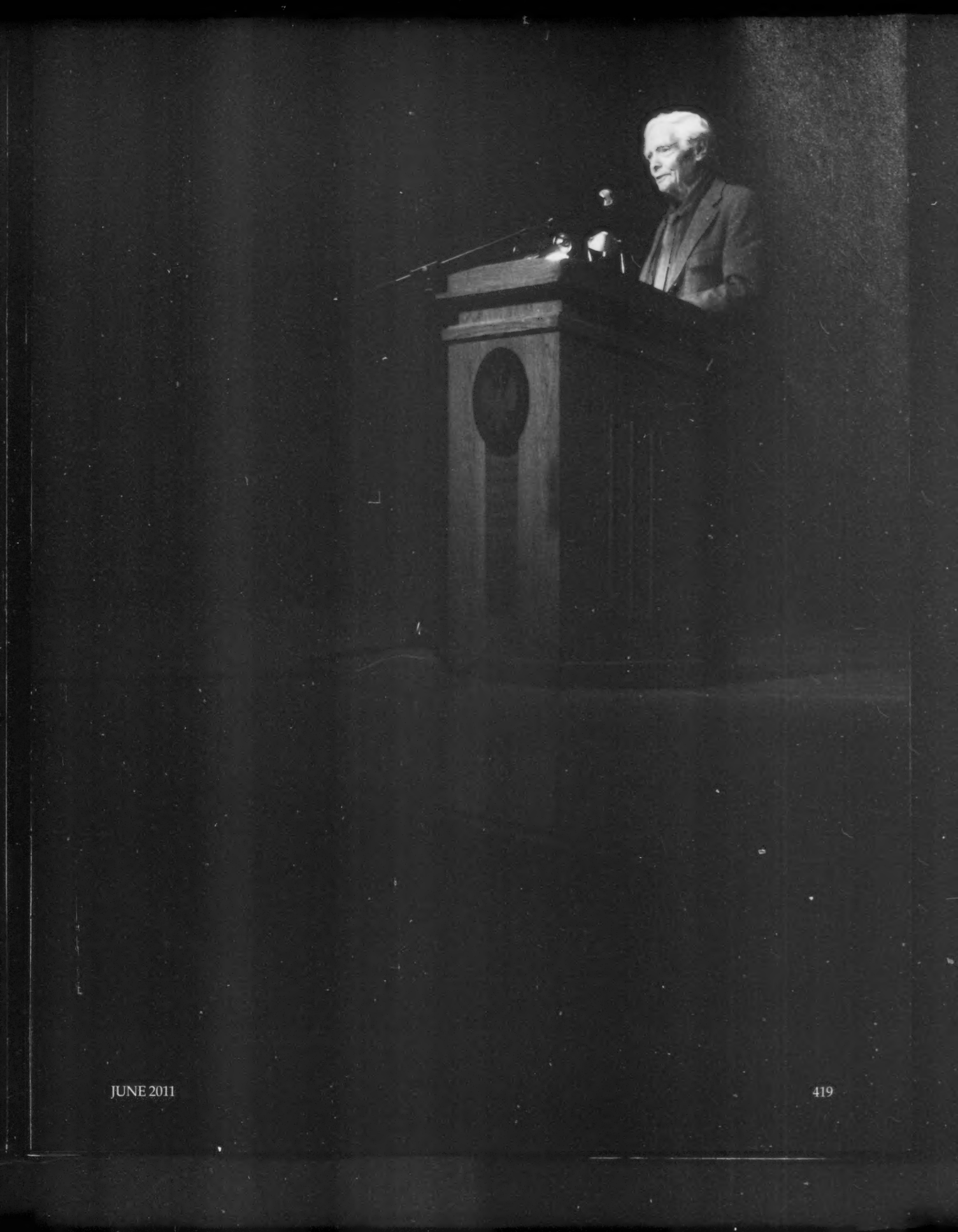
*Donna Urschel is a public affairs specialist in the Library's Office of Communications.*

Photo by Abby Brack



# Jewish Heritage

## Library Display Marks Special Month at White House

By AUDREY FISCHER

"The Jewish story is intertwined with the American story—one of overcoming great hardship, and one of commitment to building a more just world."

So said President Barack Obama in his April 29 Presidential Proclamation, declaring May 2011 as Jewish American Heritage Month.

For the second consecutive year, the White House called upon the Library of Congress to create a small display of items from its collections that underscores the contributions Jewish Americans have made to the nation.

Assembled by staff in the Hebraic Section of the African and Middle East Division, the Music Division and the Prints and Photographs Division, the display was on view during a Jewish American Heritage Month reception held at the White House on May 17. Invited guests included members of Congress, Supreme Court justices and Nobel Laureate and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel. Hebraic Section Head Peggy Pearlstein and Seth de Matties of the Interpretive Programs Office (IPO) also attended the event.

To ensure that the items were properly prepared to be exhibited, staff in IPO and the Conservation Division worked with the White House curator.

The items included:

Yiddish sheet music, "Die Fire Korbunes" (The Fire Victims), an elegy to the 146 victims of the Triangle Shirtwaist Company factory fire in New York City on March 25, 1911, that claimed the life of many young Jewish and Italian immigrant women;

A 1939 photograph of Jewish refugee children aboard the S.S. President Harding, waving at the Statue of Liberty;

A 1965 photograph of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel presenting the Judaism and World Peace Award of the Synagogue Council of America to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.;

Bronze medals marking the 300th and 350th anniversaries of Jewish settlement in America (1654).

Seth De Matties

**Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz discusses the Library exhibit with Gary Zola, executive director of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, at the White House on May 17.**

In 2004, the Library mounted a major exhibition titled "From Haven to Home" to commemorate 350 years of Jewish life in America, which may be viewed online at **www.loc.gov/exhibits/haventohome/**.

The Library also collaborated with the National Archives and Records Administration, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Gallery of Art, the National Park Service and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on a website commemorating Jewish American Heritage Month (**www.jewishheritagemonth.gov**). ◆

# Papercut Bar Mitzvah Book Donated to the Library

Israeli papercut artist Archie Granot presented to the Library of Congress "The Ram Granot Bar Mitzvah Book." Granot created this book for his son Ram (Avraham) on the occasion of his bar mitzvah in November 1987. Presented to the Library on May 17, the gift will be housed in the collections of the Hebraic Section of the Library's African and Middle Eastern Division.

Unique in scope and execution, "The Ram Granot Bar Mitzvah Book" is bound in leather and comprises seven sheets of hand-made Fabriano paper (made in Italy in the oldest continuously operating paper mill in Europe).

The first page of the book is a colored, multi-layered papercut with the name "Avraham" at its center. The upper text reads: "This—the Vision of Obadiah—is the Haftarah that Ram, son of Rivka and Aaron Yosef Granot, recited on the Holy Sabbath on the 14th of the month of Kislev in the year 5748." The lower text reads: "You are the Lord G-d who chose Abram and changed his name to Abraham" (Nehemiah 9:7).

The remaining pages contain the Haftarah, (the supplementary portion from the prophets) that Ram recited in the synagogue. This text has been enhanced by a decorative border incorporating excerpts from a piyyut, a lyrical composition for the Shabbat eve, which was composed during the second half of the 16th century by the Italian philosopher and kabbalist, Rabbi Mordechai ben Judah Dato.

Granot's creative papercuts both revive and expand an art form believed to have originated in ancient China in the second century at the time that paper was invented. Much of his work is inspired by the Holy City of Jerusalem. His imagery and texts are usually biblical, Talmudic or rabbinical. His use of Hebrew inscriptions—hand-cut in precise calligraphic letters—is an integral part of his papercuts.

Granot's papercut works include ketubot (Jewish marriage contracts), blessings for the home, Jewish ceremonial art objects and books—including a privately commissioned papercut haggadah (Passover text), which took him nearly 10 years to complete.

Abby Brack

**Above, Israeli papercut artist Archie Granot presents "The Ram Granot Bar Mitzvah Book". Right, a close-up of the book's front cover.**

Born in London in 1946, Archie Granot moved to Israel in 1967. He earned a bachelor of art degree in political science and Russian studies from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and a master of philosophy degree in Russian studies from the University of Glasgow, Scotland. His works have been exhibited extensively, including showings at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, The Israel Museum in Jerusalem and presently at the Jewish Museum in New York. He is the owner of the Archie Granot Studio and Gallery in Jerusalem. More information about the artist and his work can be found at **www.archiegranot.com**. ◆

Marlena Jones

**FLICC Director Blane Dessy and Associate Librarian for Library Services Deanna Marcum present awards to Layne Bosserman of the U.S. Justice Dept., the FLICC Library Technician of the Year, and her supervisor, Jonda Byrd.**

# FLICC Honors

## Annual Awards for Federal Librarianship

The Federal Library and Information Center Committee (FLICC) has announced the winners of its national awards for federal librarianship, which recognize the many innovative ways that federal libraries, librarians and library technicians fulfill the information demands of government, business and scholarly communities, and the American public.

The 2010 award winners were honored at the FLICC Forum held May 17 at the Library of Congress. The names of the winners will remain on permanent display in the FLICC offices at the Library of Congress. Federal libraries and staff throughout the United States and abroad competed in three award categories. Winners are listed below:

### 2010 Federal Library/ Information Center of the Year

*Large Library/Information Center (with a staff of 11 or more federal and/ or contract employees):* **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) National Library Network,** Washington, D.C., is recognized for its leadership role in creating a collaborative community and responding to patrons' needs through innovative projects. In fiscal year 2010, EPA libraries worked together to digitize 7,500 agency publications, adding to the growing inventory of more than 45,000 digital documents available to the public at no cost. EPA libraries also implemented an internal live-chat reference service and began using webinar technology to bring locally developed library classes to an agency-wide audience. Serving as a point of contact for public inquiries, EPA libraries collectively addressed nearly 9,000 public reference questions and loaned more than 8,000 documents, saving taxpayers an estimated $266,000.

*Small Library/Information Center (with a staff of 10 or fewer federal and/or contract employees):* **Medical Library, U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases,** Ft. Detrick, Md., is recognized for providing an array of educational and informational opportunities to engage its patrons and increase its value to other agencies at Fort Detrick and to

the Department of Homeland Security's National Biodefense and Countermeasures Center. In addition to designing an innovative combination of support and outreach efforts, the library digitized and preserved laboratory notebooks and developed a collection of published research papers from junior scientists. By providing searchable electronic access to these digitized resources and by maintaining its broader collection of e-resource, database, document and traditional materials, the library served more than 850 institute employees and sister-agency staff members throughout the command. In 2010, the library supported its local community by participating in the committees on Military Family Readiness, Deployed Soldier Support and Institutional Animal Care and Use. Through its internal and external outreach efforts, the library established itself as the prime source of information and innovative programming and thoroughly underscored its value to the institute and its neighboring community.

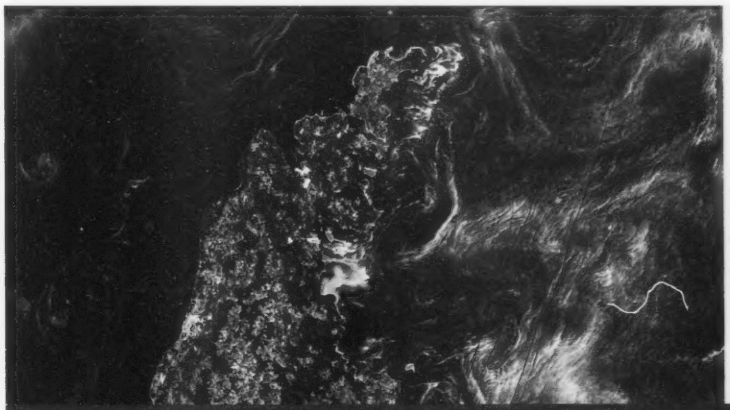
### 2010 Federal Librarian of the Year

**Eleanor G. Frierson,** deputy director of the National Agricultural Library (NAL), Beltsville, Md., is recognized for her leadership and direction of NAL and her service as co-chair of the Science.gov Alliance. She has continually nurtured partnerships across government and has advocated tirelessly for federal libraries and the value of open access to information. She has demonstrated excellence in her abilities to manage the full lifecycle of information, build dynamic collections, critically evaluate, select and filter resources from a broad array of quality sources, negotiate information acquisition and develop organizational information policies. Frierson is also known for her success in strategically mobilizing information organizations to achieve a shared vision of excellence. In 2010, she oversaw the launch of major enhancements and content additions to Science.gov 5.0, including a new search tool for science scholarships and fellowships, search for both the Federal Register and Code of Federal Regulations, and a "Science in the News" feed from U.S. science agencies. Internationally, she chairs the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) Government Information and Official Publications Section, and serves as the U.S. representative to the WorldwideScience.org Alliance.

### 2010 Federal Library Technician of the Year

**Laura (Layne) Bosserman,** Library Technician, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, D.C., is recognized for her initiative, flexibility and persistence in meeting the goals of the Justice libraries. Her work with the Washington offices and three field offices helped update their resource collections and saved the agency more than $100,000. While busy with her regular assignments of maintaining the collection, filling article and interlibrary loan requests, and cataloging new materials for a large library, Bosserman created an innovative workaround for collapsing holdings in the library's new integrated library system. In addition, she added or edited more than 2,000 catalog records for the library's periodical holdings. Bosserman is an information professional who is effective in keeping the emphasis on the value of materials while ensuring funds are spent wisely.

For the latest information on the awards, interested parties may refer to the FLICC website, **www.loc.gov/flicc/awards.html**. The Federal Library and Information Center Committee fosters excellence in federal library and information services through interagency cooperation, and provides guidance and direction for the Federal Library and Information Network (FEDLINK). Created in 1965 and headquartered at the Library of Congress, FLICC also makes recommendations on federal library and information policies, programs, and procedures to federal agencies and to others concerned with libraries and information centers. ◆



**May 31, 2011, through May 31, 2012**

***A new Library exhibition showcases images from the collection of Landsat photographs held in the Geography and Map Division that have been selected for aesthetic rather than scientific value.***

## Earth as Art: A Landsat Perspective

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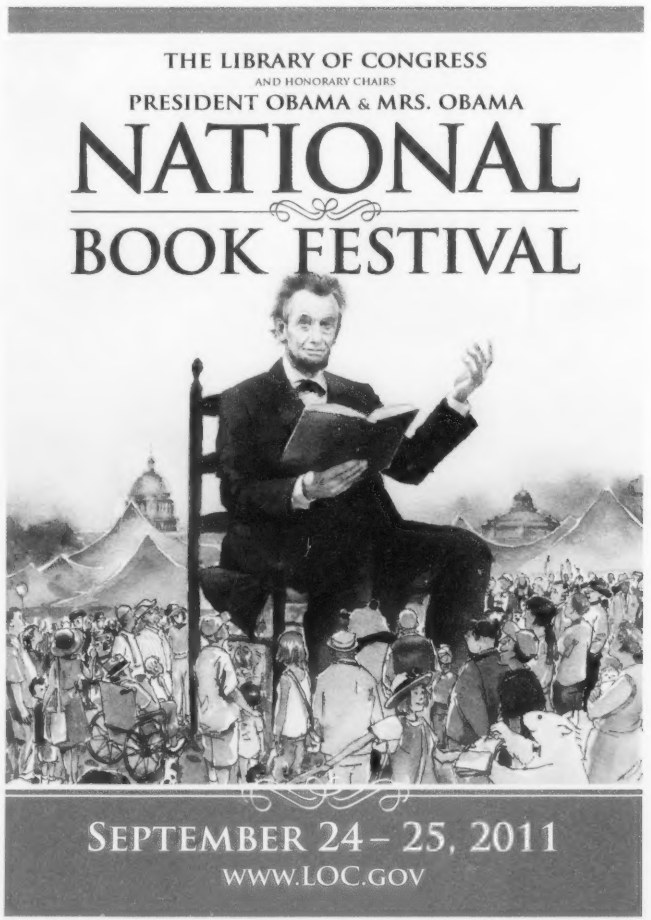


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